

**Jonathon Monken**  
**Director**

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**CONTACTS:**  
Patti Thompson 217-557-4756

## **IEMA Encourages Parents to Include Emergency Preparedness in Back-to-School Plans**

### ***August is School Preparedness Month in Illinois***

SPRINGFIELD – Students soon will be heading back to school and parents across Illinois are busy getting their children ready for the new school year. As part of School Preparedness Month during August, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) encourages parents to include emergency preparedness in those back-to-school plans.

“For many parents, back-to-school planning usually means picking up notebooks, pencils, crayons and other school supplies,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “But the new school year is also a good time to make sure you know your school’s plans for keeping kids safe during an emergency and for providing your current emergency contact information to school officials.”

Monken said no one likes to think about an emergency happening while children are in school or at daycare. However, the tornado that struck two schools in Moore, Okla., in May serves as a reminder that emergency situations can arise during the school day.

Back-to-school planning tips include:

- Know your child’s school or day care emergency plan.
- Find out where children will be taken in the event of an evacuation during school hours.
- Ensure your emergency contact information is up-to-date at your child’s school.
- Pre-authorize a friend or relative to pick up your children in an emergency and make sure the school knows who that designated person is.
- Have a family communications plan and review the plan periodically with your child. The plan should include contact information for an out-of-area family member or friend, since local telephone networks may not work during a major disaster.

Many college campuses offer email and text messages to alert students of potential dangers, such as severe weather and other threats. Encourage your college student to sign-up for such alerts. Some colleges also provide alert messages for parents so they also are aware of potential dangers at their child’s school.

Additional preparedness information is available on the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).